

Driving the Anza Trail

California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Juan Bautista de Anza
National Historic Trail



Following the path of soldiers, families, and priests



Retracing the footsteps It was over 200 years ago that Spain encouraged families to leave their homes and begin a new life in the north. Led by frontier presidio commander Juan Bautista de Anza, these first colonists successfully crossed the desert into California late in the winter of 1775. They were families of soldiers, looking for a new life on the Spanish frontier. They never dreamed that millions would one day follow in their footsteps.

Today the National Park Service remembers this epic journey with the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Stretching from Nogales, Arizona to San Francisco, California, the 1200-mile trail recognizes the sacrifices made by California's first immigrants, while acknowledging the role American Indians played in making this epic journey possible.

Today, drivers along the trail have the opportunity to relive some of the experiences of those first travelers. They can use trail signs to follow the route pioneered by Anza and his followers over two centuries ago.

Places to go: Yuma to Los Angeles

Before arriving in California along Interstate 8, visitors may stop off at the Yuma Crossing State Historical Park to take a walk and enjoy the beautiful view of the Colorado River. Near here, the expedition successfully crossed into the desert and said farewell to their allies, the Quechan Indians.

After Yuma, the historic route dips down into Baja California. The auto route continues west on I-8 and then north on CA 98 to CA 111 to CA 86 and CA 78. County 3 travels through Anza Borrego State Park - which was one of the most difficult portions of the trip. Stop off at the Visitor Center in Borrego Springs to learn more about hiking in the state park on the historic trail.

Continue west through the park to county

roads 3 and 22 - which becomes 2 -until you reach state highways 79 and 371. As you travel through the San Bernardino National Forest on Bautista Canyon Road, you will be on a graded dirt road, passable in a passenger vehicle. The sycamores, cottonwoods, and pinyon pine forest here were a welcome reprieve for the expedition.

Traveling north, you will pass through the community of Hemet and then connect with Interstate 215. Follow 215 to 60 and then Interstate 10 west. In San Gabriel, visit the mission which welcomed the Anza Expedition in 1776. In the heart of Los Angeles, a visit to El Pueblo de Los Angeles gives a vivid picture of life in early California. A walk down Olvera Street is also a good opportunity for exercise and a chance to eat some good food.

(Over)

Places to go: Los Angeles to San Francisco

The expedition followed the Los Angeles River through the area. Stop by the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens and take a break from traffic. Hike over dozen miles along the river in the heart of L.A.

Continue north on Interstate 5 and then follow CA 134 to US 101. Stop by the National Park Service visitor center at the Santa Monica Mountains NRA to learn more about hiking and camping in the area. Then, visit the Oakbrook Park Chumash Interpretive Center to discover more about the area's Chumash population.

Continue west on 101 to Santa Barbara. The Santa Barbara Presidio portrays life at a colonial Spanish outpost and is open to visitors. Continue north on 101 and switch to Highway 1 at Gaviota Pass just south of Lompoc and back to 101 north of San Luis Obispo. The state historical park at La Purisima and the mission in San Luis Obispo are also open for visitors and are along the auto route. At Paso Robles, continue north on county roads G 14, G 15, and then G 17.

Take Highway 68 west to visit the expedition's original goal, the Monterey Presidio,

and see the past come alive. Visit the Monterey State Historic Park at Custom House Plaza for an overview of the Spanish and Mexican periods. A trip to Carmel brings you to the historic mission. Take 101 north to the San Juan Grade and visit the Mission in San Juan Bautista. Consider taking in the scenery from the hiking trail near the mission.

Continue north on 101 to Santa Clara University for a view of the Mission. The Peralta Adobe in San Jose is open to visitors as well. Drive north on Interstate 280 and exit onto 82 -the El Camino Real. Switch to Highway 1 and follow it north into San Francisco. The route will take you to the Presidio of San Francisco.

Drive out to the Golden Gate Bridge and you will be on the end of the Anza Trail, overlooking Fort Point. It was here that Anza stood and decided where to build the Presidio that would protect the families, soldiers and priests of this northernmost outpost in the Spanish empire. In San Francisco, end your tour with a stop by Mission Dolores, founded by the settlers on the Anza Expedition.

Resources

Yuma Crossing State Park 201 North Fourth Avenue, Yuma, south of I-8. Visitor Center. Restrooms. Picnic area. Camping and food nearby. 520 329-0471

Anza Borrego Desert State Park Two miles west of Borrego Springs, on S-22. Visitor Center. Restrooms. Picnic area. Camping. Food in Borrego Springs. 760 767-5311.

San Bernardino National Forest Bautista Canyon Road. Primitive camping. Food in Hemet and Anza. 909 659-2117.

San Gabriel Mission 428 S. Mission Drive, San Gabriel. Self guided historical walk of Mission District. Museum. Restrooms. Food available in town. 626 457-3035.

El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument Olvera Street, Los Angeles. Museum. Restrooms. Food. 213 680-2381.

LA River Center and Gardens 570 W. Avenue 26, LA. Visitor Center. Restrooms. 323 221-8900.

Santa Monica NRA 401 W. Hillcrest Dr., Thousand Oaks. Visitor Center. Restroom. Food nearby. Camping. 805 370-2301.

Oakbrook Chumash Interpretive Center 3290 Lang Ranch Parkway, Thousand Oaks.

Visitor Center. Restrooms. Food nearby. 805 492-8076

El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park 123 East Canon Perdido, Santa Barbara. Museum. Restrooms. Camping and food in town. 805 965-0093

La Purisima Mission State Historic Park 2295 Purisima Rd., Lompoc. Museum. Restrooms. Food and camping nearby. 805 733-3713.

San Luis Obispo de Tolosa Mission 751 Palm Street. Restrooms. Museum. Food and lodging in town. 805 781-7303.

Monterey State Historic Park 20 Custom House Plaza. Museum. Restrooms. Food and lodging nearby. 831 649-7118.

Peralta Adobe 175 West Saint John Street, San Jose. Open 1 to 5 p.m. daily for guided tours. 408 993-8182.

Mission Santa Clara de Asís and Santa Clara University 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara. Museum. Restrooms. Food in town. 408 554-4700.

Presidio/Golden Gate NRA 102 Montgomery Street, San Francisco. Visitor Center. Food. Limited camping. Youth Hostel. 415 561-4323.

Contact

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was created by Congress in 1990 to commemorate the epic journey of colonists from Mexico to San Francisco. The trail is administered by the National Park Service in cooperation with public and private partners. For information about the trail, contact the trail superintendent at 1111 Jackson, Oakland California, 94607. Or call 510 817-1438. (English); 510 817-1323 (Spanish). You can visit the trail website at www.nps.gov/juba or at <http://anza.uoregon.edu>.